

Paul Robert Magocsi, ed. — *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. viii, 308.

*Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction* is a collection of short essays concerning major aboriginal groups in Canada. The title well describes the nature of the publication, meant as a point of departure for those willing to learn more about Native Canada. The book is divided into 12 sections devoted to the following aboriginal groups: Algonquian (Eastern Woodlands), Algonquians (Plains), Algonquians (Subarctic), Inuit, Iroquoians, Ktunaxa, Métis, Na-Dene, Salish, Siouans, Tsimshian, and Wakashans.

The sections or chapters are of uneven length, although their layout is similar. Each chapter (with the strange exception of those dealing with the Métis and the Subarctic Algonquians) identifies the group and addresses its history, economic life, kinship and family, social organization, culture, religion, education, language and communication, politics, and intergroup relations. The shortest sections (between 13 and 16 pages in length) deal with the Siouans, the Salish and the Algonquians of the Subarctic, while Algonquians of Eastern Woodlands receive four times as much space, and the remaining chapters fall somewhere in between.

The overview of various aboriginal groups brings us from the pre-Contact period to the most recent times, including the discussion of sweeping changes following the implementation of Bill C-31. In some cases the authors do not shy away from problems and controversies often ignored by many scholars. Janet E. Chute identifies nepotism and lack of accountability as important challenges facing self-governing Native communities (p. 79). Alexander von Gernet, writing about the Iroquoians, states that “contrary to popular opinion and frequent assertions by Iroquois traditionalists, at the time of first European contact there were no Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga or Seneca living anywhere in what is now known as Canada” (p. 154). The author’s assertion might be disputed by people other than the aforementioned traditionalists. The issue of aboriginal occupancy (as the authors of the compendium know very well) differs greatly from the Old World concepts of residence. Iroquoians, although sedentary peoples, moved their villages over vast tracts of land in a multi-year cycle. According to Amerindians, “living on the land” implied taking advantage of its resources, and this included hunting. Defined in terms of hunting territories, the Iroquois’ presence definitely extends to the territories of the Dominion.

Overall, although the volume does fulfil its promise and enables newcomers to aboriginal studies to grasp the basics, several methodological flaws significantly lessen its value. There is no rational explanation why certain groups were given much more consideration than others. The readers can only guess that the Ktunaxa (15 pages) figure more centrally on the aboriginal scene than the James Bay Cree (5 pages), or the Northern Ojibwa (2 pages). The previously mentioned inconsistency in the internal structure of each section is not helpful to a reader trying to compare the discussed Native groups. Another serious drawback of this publication is the

lack of maps. Every work of introductory nature (and such is the stated objective of this volume) requires an extensive and firm geographical footing. In the case of aboriginal groups, given their frequent migrations, a set of maps is an absolute must. In this respect *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction* falls short of one's expectations.

In terms of its origins, purpose, and editorial methodology, the book is somewhat unorthodox. In 1999 the Multicultural History Society of Ontario together with the University of Toronto Press published a volume titled *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*. According to the editor, the "size of the Encyclopedia (over 1,400 pages) and its price limited its accessibility". To find a larger audience, the editor decided to extract from the bulky volume all entries devoted to Canada's aboriginal peoples and publish them separately, under a new title. Hence the arrival of this book. Furthermore, according to the editor, next volumes should follow, also based upon the entries in the *Encyclopedia* and devoted to various other ethnic/national groups living in Canada (such as East Asians, Latin Americans, Muslims, Slavs, to name but a few). Much may be said for the value of making academic publications readily available to a broader audience, but whether reprinting sections of the *Encyclopedia* under new names is the most appropriate way to proceed remains doubtful. The financial support provided by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Book Publishing Industry Development Program could have been used more productively to facilitate publication of new, original manuscripts.

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Suzanne Morton — *At Odds: Gambling and Canadians, 1919–1969*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. xi, 272.

This wonderful book comes at just the right time. It is about the history of gambling in Canada during the twentieth century, most particularly about that period of Canadian history when active efforts were being made to regulate or even prevent gambling on moral grounds.

There are at least two main themes to this admirable, meaty book. One is that moralistic legislation carries its own costs and dangers, and in the end does not work. If people want to gamble (or drink, or indulge other vices), they will find a way to do so. However, this reminds us that — for better or worse — there was a time in Canadian society when legislation was passed on moral, rather than economic or political, grounds. Today, we hesitate to impose a single morality on everyone. Nowhere is this clearer than in the debate about gay and lesbian marriage, but the same point could be made in reference to the marijuana debate or the recurring debates about capital punishment, imprisonment, abortion, animal rights, genetic engineering, and other issues involving fundamental rights to life and freedom.

As sociologist Emile Durkheim told us over a century ago, in his classic work *The Division of Labor in Society*, a large, diverse society cannot operate on a single